

REMARKS

The Office Action dated November 28, 2003 has been received and carefully studied.

The Examiner requires that the application be restricted to one of Groups I-VI as outlined on page 2 of the action. Applicants hereby elect Group II, claims 2-3. In addition, by the accompanying amendment, claims 4-10 have been amended to depend from claim 2 and read on the elected species. Claims 1 and 11-17 have been withdrawn without prejudice.

Applicants also elect poly(meth)acrylic acid derivatives as the species of the water-absorptive polymer, and a polyvalent metal silicate as the gellant.

Respectfully submitted,



Kevin S. Lemack
Reg. No. 32,579
176 E. Main Street - Suite 7
Westboro, Massachusetts 01581
TEL: (508) 898-1818